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ISLAMIC FACTS REFUTING THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST ISLAM

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بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Bismi Allahi Alrrahmani Alrraheemi

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful

ISLAMIC FACTS
Refuting the Allegations against Islam

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since its advent, Islam has been engaged in a continuous struggle against the repeated endeavours to obliterate the truth for which it stands.
This struggle will continue until the world comes to an end, since the struggle between truth and falsehood and between virtue and sin is eternal and began with the creation of man and will continue as long as mankind inhabits the earth.

Islam is the final and conclusive Divine Faith revealed by God Almighty, and accordingly the last link or Divine communication from the heavens to the earth. As such Islam has been subjected to more false accusations than the previous religions since it came: " in truth confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety".(5/48)

The allegations against Islam, since its advent and until the present day, have been repeatedly circulated, the only difference being the wording and the attempt to present them in a semblance of scientific diction. The scholars of Islam answered these allegations each according to his own thought and we do not belittle the efforts of those scholars. The aim of this book is to present conclusive and verified proof regarding the most important allegations against Islam that have been raised and repeated in recent years especially in the age of the

Internet.

Accordingly, God Willing, in the very near future, these authentic proofs will be transmitted on the Internet, and thus we offer our modest contribution in dispelling all points of misunderstanding and misrepresentation regarding the Faith of Islam, its teachings, and its Prophet.

May God the Almighty bless our efforts.

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CHAPTER ONE
The Glorious Qur'an

(1) Is the Qur'an a Divine Revelation or is it contrived by man?

1- The Qur'an is the Divine Book of Islam that contains the tenets and religious laws upon which the Faith of Islam is founded and is also the source of its morals and ethics. If the Qur'an is proved to be a Divine Revelation, which is free from all falsehood, there is no alternative but to believe in it.

Accordingly, the powers hostile to Islam since the past and up to the present day have done their utmost to shake the belief in the authenticity and Divine origin of the Qur'an. In the past, the Pagans of Makkah did everything in their power to challenge the belief that the Qur'an was a Divine Revelation and they claimed: "Naught is this but a lie which be has forged and others have helped him at it". [1] They also described the Qur'an as being: "Tales of the ancients, which he has caused to be written; and they are dictated before him morning and evening",[2] and that Muhammad was taught by a man: "it is a man that teaches him".[3] They even alleged that the Qur'an was the work of a magician

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(1) 25/4
(2) 25/5
(3) 16/103

or a priest, in order to deny that it was a Divine Revelation inspired to Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him, to guide mankind.

A number of Orientalists who were biased against Islam supported the Pagans' false accusations and made desperate attempts to convince the world that the Qur'an was not a Divine Revelation but had been contrived by Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him These Orientalists repeated the Pagans' allegations despite the Qur'an's authentic and conclusive proofs to the contrary.

Since Muhammad was illiterate he charged some of his companions to commit to writing the Divine Inspiration that was revealed to him. Had he been able to read and write, he would not have needed anybody to write down the verses that had been revealed to him. The allegation that he relied upon the Jewish and Christian scriptures in the Qur'an is not only false but is also ridiculous, for how could an illiterate person read, understand, and convey any beliefs existing in the Holy Books of other religions? How and when could that have happened? Such false allegations are not based upon any facts or proofs.

2- Muhammad, blessings and peace be upon him, preached his message in Makkah for about thirteen years, during which time there was no relationship between him and the Jews, and this fact is

historically authenticated. His relationship with Christians has also been magnified beyond proportion. It has been related that when Muhammad was about eleven years old, he traveled with his uncle Abdul Muttalib in a caravan to Syria. During the short time that the caravan rested, Muhammad met Bahiri, a Christian monk, and talked to him for a few minutes. How could a boy of that age possibly comprehend the principles, rules, precepts, and fundamentals of a religion in the few minutes that Bahiri had talked to him? Also why did Bahiri the monk choose Muhammad cut of all the people in the caravan to teach him the principles of the Religion of Christianity? In addition to all this, why did Muhammad wait thirty years alter his meeting with Bahiri before proclaiming his new faith? Such a story is not credible by any means.

This matter led the Orientalist Huart to reject this story as being fabricated. He affirmed that not one of the Arabic documents and manuscripts that have been discovered, studied, and published support this false allegation. He added: "The role allegedly played by the Syrian Monk was nothing but the imagination of the author of the story".[1]

3. The Qur'an, in common with the divine religions

[1] Diraz, Muhammad Abdullah, An Introduction to the Qu'ran, Dar Al-Qalam, Kuwait, 1971, p.35fn. (This Book is one of two scientific theses presented in French to Paeis University, 1947).

previously revealed, declared that there was one God, the Creator of the Universe and that all creatures are destined to return to Him. God Alone is the Source of all divine religions, so there should be no conflict in the fundamental precepts.

The Qur'an, however, opposed many other prevalent beliefs among the followers of both Judaism and Christianity. This in itself is sufficient proof to refute the allegation that Muhammad referred to the Jewish and Christian sources of faith. Had that been the case, the difference in these beliefs would have been insignificant and would not have involved fundamental beliefs.

4. No other scripture or Holy Book other than the Qur'an included scientific facts and cosmic and biological phenomena in its verses more than fourteen centuries ago, all of which were discovered only in the fifties of the twentieth century[1] following the advanced progress in all branches of science. Examples of this include the successive stages of the embryo and the foetus in the womb[2] ,

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[1] Bucaille, Morris. The Qur'an, The Torah, the Gospel, and Science.' A Study or the Holy Books in the Light of Recent Progress in Science, Dar Al Ma'arif Publishing House. 1978.

[2] a. The transformation from the sperm to the human form[23/14].
b. Emigration of sex cells from the yolk sac to the loin[7/172].

the sun, the moon, the planets, the wind, rain, etc [1]

When astronomers failed to find a scientific explanation for a phenomenon they admitted that it was the result of "The Divine Hand". Where could the illiterate Prophet Muhammad have possibly acquired such highly advanced scientific information? It cannot be claimed that his sources in these matters were Jewish or Christian Scriptures, which make no reference to any such matters. The only source of the inspired verses of the Qur'an was undoubtedly and exclusively God Almighty, the Creator of the Universe, and could not possibly have been any human source.

(2) Was the Qur'an contrived from previous scriptures?

1- Had the Qur'an been contrived from previously revealed scriptures, Muhammad's adversaries would not have ignored the matter and remained silent. They would undoubtedly have seized the opportunity to accuse him to that effect. All their allegations were unfounded and lacked proof. The Qur'an itself has already mentioned these allegations and their refutations, as we have already pointed out in the first chapter above.

2- The Qur'an includes many laws, rulings, instructions, and commands which did not exist in

(1) a. Location of the stars [56/75].
b. Expansion of the Universe. [51/47].

the previous scriptures. Furthermore, the Qur'an contains narratives with detailed accounts of previous generations in addition to prophecies which were fulfilled. An example of this was the final outcome of the conflict between the Romans and the Persians, the events of which were unknown to Muhammad, his people, or the followers of Judaism and Christianity.

3- The Qur'an urged people to acquire knowledge and to respect the human mind and intellect. Accordingly, based on Islam's new teachings and rulings, the Muslims were able, in a very short time, to establish a civilization which replaced the preceding civilizations and flourished for many centuries. Had the Qur'an been compiled from the previous divine religions, why then did these religions not include the aforementioned precepts and teachings and did not play the same role as Islam?

4- The Qur'an is a Book whose style is consistent and eloquent. Had it been compiled from other scriptures it would have been incoherent, contradictory, and inconsistent due to the alleged various sources.[1]

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[1] "…Had it been from other than God, they would surely have found therein much discrepancy." [4/82]

Moreover, the Qur'an always addresses one's sense and reasoning and does not include fables or myths. It relies upon evidence and facts and demands the same of its adversaries: "Produce your proof, if you are truthful". [2/11 and 27/64] This approach is considered a completely new approach and does not exist in any previous scripture.

5- It is evident that Islam completely rejected the evil beliefs of paganism, its way of life, and its brutal traditions and replaced them with true faith and a life of virtue. Where then is the Pagan culture that Islam has been falsely accused of adopting from Pre-Islamic Paganism?

(3) Is it true that the Qur'an did not introduce any new precepts and rulings?

In addition to the previous authentic refutation of the second accusation regarding the Qur'an, one may add:

1- The Qur'an related facts totally unknown to the People of the Books. For example, it narrated the story of Zakariyya and the birth of the Virgin Mary and his guardianship of her. The Qur'an also devoted a whole chapter to the Virgin Mary, which is unparalleled in the New Testament Where could the Prophet Muhammad possibly have acquired these facts?

2- It is related in Exodus that it was Pharaoh's

daughter who adopted Moses as a baby, whereas the Qur'an states that Pharaoh's wife found him and adopted him. We also read in Exodus that "Aaron Fashioned the gold and moulded the calf..." that was worshipped by the Jews, whereas the Qur'an states that the Samiri was the culprit and that Aaron was innocent. [1/150]

3- If the Qur'an had been derived From the Holy scriptures of the Jews and the Christians, why did Islam reject the principle of the Trinity, which is a fundamental belief in Christianity? Why did Islam also reject the belief in the crucifixion of Christ, redemption, the Original Sin, and the divinity of Christ? [1]

4- The Qur'an presents the Prophets of God as ideals of morality and virtue whereas the Old Testament states that some of them committed sins and this is incompatible with the veneration accorded them by Islam.

5- Religious observances commanded in the Qur'an such as praying, fasting, alms giving, and the pilgrimage to Makkah, in addition to the instructions and teachings stated as to the manner of how each observance is to be performed, are matters that are unparalleled and are not mentioned in any other religion. The five daily prayers are performed in a

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[1] Zakzouk, M. Hamdy: Idalm in the Morror of Western Thought. Dar Al-Fikr Al Araby, 1994, pp.76,76, and 85.

certain manner at appointed times with the recital of certain specific verses of the Qur'an. Fasting entails total abstinence from food, drink, and physical desire from dawn till sunset. Alms vary in quantity and in the way that they are donated. The Pilgrimage entails circling around the Ka'ba, being assembled in a great gathering at Mount Arafat, going to and forth seven times between AI-Safaa and Al-Marwa, and pelting Satan with stones. These are all religious observances which are specifically related to Islam. Which religion could possibly have been the source of these religious observances?

(4) Did the collection of the Qur'an cast any doubt on the authenticity of its text?

1- The Prophet chose scribes from among his companions, who wrote down everything that had been inspired to him by Divine Revelation immediately after its revelation. They wrote on whatever was available such as parchment, wood, pieces of leather, stones, or flat bones. According to authentic Islamic sources there were twenty-nine scribes, the most renowred among whom were the Rightly-Guided Caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Omar, 'Othman 'Ali in addition to Mu'awiya, Al-Zubayr lbn Al-'Awwam, Sa'eed Ibn AI-'Aas, 'Amr Ibn AI-'Aas, Ubay Ibn Ka'b and Zayd lbn Thabit.

2- In addition to the scribes who wrote down the

inspired Revelation of the verses of the Qur'an there were us who learnt what was revealed by heart. This fine tradition has continued throughout the centuries and exists to this very day. There were hundreds of Muslims who learnt the Qur'an by heart and specialized in reciting it during the Prophet's lifetime. The Prophet declared that he always revised the recital of the Qur'an once a year during month of Ramadan in the presence of the Angel Gabriel, and he revised its recital twice during the last Ramadan of his life. The Qur'an was arranged in its final form according to the Prophet's instructions and every single verse was placed exactly as he had commanded.

3- One year after the Prophet's death, seventy of the learned men who had learnt the Qur'an by heart were killed in the Battle of Al Yamama against Musaylima the liar, and 'Omar Ibn AI-Khattab advised the Caliph Abu Bakr to charge Zayd Ibn Thabit, one of the scribes, with collecting the various documents upon which the Qur'an was written and to have them written in a complete copy that would be easy to refer to. Following this a rule was enforced by which manuscripts were considered authentic and accepted or rejected as not being authentic. Th authentic manuscripts were those that had been dictated by the Prophet Muhammad as witnessed by two persons. Naturally, the Companions of the

Prophet who had learnt the Qur'an by heart played an important role in this matter. When Zayd Ibn Thabit completed his mission of recording in writing the whole Qur'an, he presented it to Abu bakr, who presented it before his death to 'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, who gave it to his daughter Hafsa before his death.

4- During the Caliphate of 'Othman Ibn 'Affan, a committee of four scribes including Zayd Ibn Thabit was formed. These scribes wrote five copies of the original manuscript preserved by Hafsa, Mother of the Faithful One copy was sent to Makkah, another copy to Al-Madina, and the third copy was sent to Al-Basra. The fourth and fifth copies were sent to Kufa and to Damascus. These four diligent and precise scribes had copied the original authentic manuscript and had also checked it with what the learned men who had lived during the Prophet's lifetime had committed to memory. This is the Mushaf, namely the Glorious Book of the Qur'an, which has been in circulation in the Muslim world ever since.

No one has ever disputed the authenticity of the Qur'an since it was first recorded in writing more than fourteen centuries ago up to this very day. This point has been confirmed by a number of Orientalists among whom are Loblois, Muir, and the contemporary German Orientalist Rudi Paret who

stated in the introduction of his translation of the Qur'an: "There is no reason to doubt that any verse the Qur'an could be ascribed to any person other than Muhammad." He meant that after the death of Muhammad no one had altered anything in the Qur'an either by adding a single word to it or removing a single word from it.[1]

No proof has ever been presented to dispute or deny the authenticity of the manuscript compiled during the Caliphate of 'Othman Ibn 'Affan. If any of the companions of the Prophet had had any other manuscripts in their possession, they would have produced them and disputed the authorized copy. Such an allegation has never been made in the history of Islam and even the sects that have been looked upon as dissenters, such as the contemporary Ahmadites, sanction the same certified copy the Qur'an.

[1] Diraz, Muhammad Abdullah,: An Introduction to the Qur'an, p.34 ff. Also see Rudi Paret: Der Koran Ubersetzung. Stuttgart, 1980, p.5.

CHAPTER TWO
The Prophet Muhammad
(Blessings and Peace be upon him)

(1) Was the Prophet Muhammad sent with the Message of Islam to the Arabs or to all mankind?

1- The very first time that Muhammad proclaimed his message to the people, he declared the following: "I am the messenger of God to all mankind and to you in particular" This means that the Divine Message was sent to all mankind right from the very beginning and that the Prophet never claimed that it was meant to be a religion for Arabs alone. This is confirmed by another of the Prophet's sayings: "Every Prophet was sent to his own people whereas I was sent to all mankind".[1]

2- Anyone who reads the Qur'an can understand that it addresses all people and calls upon all mankind to believe in the religion of God. This appeal to all mankind in the verses that were revealed in Makkah, before his emigration to Al-Medina, is as clear as daylight. For example, in the verse 107 of Sura (chapter) 21 we read: "In no way did We send you but as a Mercy for all creatures". Similarly the opening Sura of the Qur'an "Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds".

[1] Related by Al-Bukhari.

This was revealed to the Prophet before his emigration to Al-Madina where he established the Muslim state.

3-From the aforementioned facts we can decisively refute the allegation that the Prophet changed his plans according to circumstances. There was a gradual development of legislation, which is a normal and logical procedure. It is impossible for any person to change his customary manner of behaviour, conduct, mental attitude, habits, or character overnight, since, inherent, deeply rooted customs are very difficult to eliminate. Islam began by establishing the belief in God into the hearts and minds of the people and this was the solid foundation upon which legislation could then be established, in order to be the basis of a gradual change in the peoples' way of life. This was the policy that was followed regarding many religious rulings and laws, such as the gradual prohibition of intoxicants, usury, and the abolition of slavery, etc. In fact, the Makkan period was a period during which the Faith was established and confirmed. Accordingly, further religious laws and rulings were introduced in the Madinite period.

(2) What were the reasons for the Prophet's marriages?

1- The Prophet Muhammad was twenty-five years

old when he married Khadija, his first wife, who was fifteen years his senior and had been married twice. She remained he wife for twenty-eight years until she died and he did not marry any other woman during this period of his life.

He was always faithful to her memory, so much so that this loyalty provoked jealousy among some of his wives in later years.

2- The Prophet's nature, character and way of life before and after his prophet hood are absolute proof that he was neither lustful nor sensuous. How could a man who was more than fifty years old suddenly change and become a slave to lust, when he had had every opportunity as a young man to follow his desires, in common with the other young men of his tribe. On the contrary, Muhammad was well known for his virtue, and his only wife who was a virgin was 'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, while most of wives were widows whom he married for humane reasons or in order to enforce a religious observance or ruling and not for any sensuous desire on his part.[1]

3- As regards his marriage to Sawda, daughter of Zam'a, who was the widow of one of his companions, he was more than fifty years old at the time, and she was neither beautiful, wealthy, nor of

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(1) Islam in the Mirror of Western Thought, pp.31 and 42.

noble descent. He married her in order to care for and support the family of his companion, who had suffered torture and death for his faith in God. His marriage to 'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr,and Hafsa, daughter of 'Omar, at later dates were in order to strengthen the ties between himself and his companions Abu Bakr and 'Oman

4- As regards Um Salama, she was the widow of a martyr who had been mortally wounded in the battle of Uhud. She was an old woman, and when the Prophet proposed marriage to her she tried to excuse herself from accepting because of her age, but the Prophet consoled her and married her for humane reasons.

The Prophet married Ramlah, daughter of Abu Sufyan, who had emigrated to Abyssinia with her husband who had renounced Islam, become a Christian, and had abandoned her, leaving her without any maintenance. The Prophet sent a message to AI-Najashi, who ruled Abyssinia, requesting Ramlah's return to her homeland to deliver her from the estrangement which she felt in a foreign land and to deliver her from the persecution of her own Pagan family in Makkah, had she been forced to return to them. The Prophet also hoped that by this marriage her influential father in Makkah might be induced to embrace Islam.

The Prophet married Jawayriyya, daughter of

Al-Harith, who was among the captives captured at the battle of Bani Al-Mustalaq. Her father was the chief and master of his tribe, and the Prophet married her in order to liberate her from captivity, and he requested the Muslims to liberate their captives and set them free.

The Prophet married Safiyya who was the daughter of the chief of the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayza. She was allowed to choose between returning to her people or being set free by marrying the Prophet and she preferred to marry the Prophet to returning to her tribe.[1]

5- The Prophet's marriage to his cousin Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh was in order to establish a religious ruling. She had been married to Zayd Ibn Haritha, the Prophet's adopted son. Their marriage did not last long and she was divorced. It was the custom of the Arabs during that period to prohibit any marriage between a man and his adopted son's divorced wife. The Prophet was ordered by God to marry Zaynab in order to abolish this ruling which was totally unnecessary. The following Qur'anic verse established this ruling: ".. Then when Zayd had dissolved his marriage with her, with the necessary formality, We joined her in marriage to you: in order that in the future there may be no difficulty in the

[1] Al-Aqqad, Abbas. True Facts about Islam and the Falsehood of its Opponents Cairo, 1957. P.192.

matter of marriage with the wives of their adopted sons, when the latter have dissolved with the necessary formality their marriage with them and God's Command must be fulfilled." [33/37]

3) What is the proof of the authenticity of the Traditions of the Prophet?

Some Western Orientalists doubt the authenticity of the traditions of the Prophet. For example, Goldziher considers them to be the invention of Muslims in the early time of Islam. The answer to all these allegations is as follow:

1. The Prophet's Traditions are the second source of the Faith of Islam after the Qur'an. The Prophet was commanded by God to relate to all the people everything that had been inspired to him by God and in addition the explanation of the Qur'an's verses. [5/67:16/44, 64] The Prophet's interpretation of the Qur'an, his conduct, his actions, and his advice are all essential elements of his Traditions. The Prophet himself referred to the necessity of adhering to his traditions in his famous farewell speech in which he said: 'I have left two matters for you and if you adhere to them both you will never be misled. They are God's Book, the Qur'an, and my Traditions".

2- There is no denying that there are many false fabricated traditions and sayings that have been attributed to the Prophet, but the learned scholars of

Islam were always aware of this possibility and accordingly scrutinized every single tradition attributed to the Prophet. Thc Qur'an has stated the most important method for judging any matter, namely: "O you who believe! If a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth..." [49/6]

The Personality, character, and conduct of the person who relates the tradition are important factors to be taken into consideration when judging the authenticity of his version of the Tradition. This rule has assisted the Muslims who applied it to the people who narrated the Prophet's Traditions. This method of criticism has led to the development of the science of historical research.

3- As a result of the importance of the Prophet's Traditions, Muslin scholars have done their utmost to confirm the authentic Traditions and to reject the false and fabricated versions. They also established new branches of learning related to the Traditions of the Prophet. These new branches of learning include the science of ascription, of challenging and contesting a point of argument, and the science of adaptation all of which were introduced for the express purpose of investigating the character, conduct, way of life, and the credibility of those who related the Traditions of the Prophet. The Prophet Muhammad had warned the people of attributing any

false sayings or actions to him saying: "He who attributes falsehoods to me intentionally shall dwell in the fire of Hell"

4- One of the many scholars who devoted their life to the study of authenticating the Prophet's Tradition is Imam Al-Bukhari (810-870H.).[1] He collected more than half a million traditions attributed to the Prophet, which he scrutinized, examined, and studied painstakingly and methodically. After applying the strict academic elimination of doubted traditions, he finally approved only nine thousand Traditions.

If we omit the Traditions which convey the same meaning we are left with only three thousand traditions. Other Muslim scholars followed AI-Bukhari's method of authenticating the traditions that they studied.

5- Following the painstaking efforts made by the Muslim scholars to authenticate the Traditions, six book on the Prophet's Traditions were approved and acknowledged. They are entitled: Bukhari's Authentic Traditions, Muslim's Authentic Traditions, The Prophet' Traditions by Al-Nasa'y, by Abu Dawood, by Al Tirmidhy, and by Ibn Maja. There are also many books which mention and reject tens of thousands of unauthenticated and fabricated

[1] Iqbal, Muhammad, The Renewal of Religious Thought in Islam. P. 160

traditions.
Thus it is evident that the Muslim scholars have studied and authenticated The Prophet's Traditions with unparalleled devotion and accuracy and that casting an doubt upon this matter is totally unjustified.

(4) Are there any contradictions in the Sayings of the Prophet?

One of the main objections against the authenticity of the Traditions of the Prophet is the allegation that they contain contradictions. Therefore, I would like to add the following reflections to my argumentation in the preceding section of this chapter.

1- The Qur'an commands Muslims to be guided by what the Prophet said and did and to consider him as their ideal. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verses: "He who obeys the Prophet obeys God" [4/80]. "So take what the Prophet assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you". [59/7]

The Prophet's Traditions include all that the Prophet permitted us to do and all that he forbade us to do. Therefore, the Traditions of the Prophet are an essential part of the Faith of Islam and if we neglect to abide by them we will be willfully disobeying the Qur'an.

2- There is no difficulty in distinguishing an

authentic Tradition from unauthentic or fabricated traditions after the Muslim Scholars laid down the rules in this matter several centuries ago. As we already mentioned in the last section, we can never dispense with the Prophet's Traditions since they are the second source of the Faith of Islam. We must adhere to the teachings stated in the Traditions and realize that any doubt concerning contradictory traditions can be clarified by applying the method and the rules established by the Muslim scholars, which enable one to distinguish the authentic tradition from the unauthentic and fabricated ones.

3- The Traditions of the Prophet are the most precise interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an by the Prophet himself; so how can we possibly dispense with them because of imaginary reasons? Muslims perform their daily prayers according to the manner and instructions described in detail in the Traditions of the Prophet. The manner of performing one's prayers is not mentioned in the Qur'an and there are many other similar matters that are explained in the Traditions.

4- The scriptures of the divine religions that preceded Islam were written in a manner and style similar to that of the Prophet's Traditions, yet none of the followers of these religions (Jews and Christians) demanded that they should be rejected as a result of the inconsistency that exists in certain

religious observances and the lack of authenticity concerning some events. Such matters must be studied objectively and authentic proofs concerning inconsistent narratives must be sought and this is the method that was established and followed by Muslim scholars centuries ago.

Chapter Three
The Muslim Conquests and the Truth Regarding Muslim Wars (Jihad) and the Issue of Violence

(1) Was Islam spread by the sword?

1- There is a fundamental rule stated in the Qur'an. namely the right to choose one's religion: "let there be no compulsion in religion". [2/256] Accordingly, Islam emphasized that a person's belief in Islam or his rejecting to believe in it is a matter that depends upon man's free will and his sincere conviction. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)". [18/129] God, in the verses of the Qur'an. drew the Prophet's attention to this fact and emphasized that he was only a messenger whose duty was only to convey the Divine Message and that he had no authority to force people into conforming to Islam. This is clearly expressed in the following Qur'anic verses: "Will you then compel mankind, against their will, to believe?" [10/99] "You are not one to manage (men's) affairs". [88/10] "If then they turn away, We have not send you as a guard over them. Your duty is but to convey (The Message)". [42/48] The aforementioned verses make it quite clear that the Glorious Book of the Muslims definitely prohibits forcing anyone to follow the Faith of Islam.

2- Islam has defined the course that Muslin's must follow when inviting people to believe in the Faith of Islam and the manner in which the Faith should be spread everywhere

The manner in which Muslims should invite people to embrace Islam is stated in the following Qur'anic verses:

"Invite (all) to the Way of your God with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious" [16/125] and "Speak fair to the people." [2/83)

The Qur'an contains no less than one hundred and twenty verses which emphasize that the basic rule to be followed, when Muslims invite people to believe in Islam, is to convince them calmly and graciously and then to leave them to decide for themselves whether to accept or reject the Faith. After the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet addressed its people saying: "You are free now", and he did not force them to adopt Islam inspite of his decisive victory.

3- The Muslims never forced a Jew or a Christian to adopt Islam and 'Omar Ibn AI-Khattab, the Second Rightly-Guided Caliph, assured the people of Jerusalem that their lives, their churches, and their crosses would not be harmed on account of his faith. The Prophet recorded in his first constitution for Al-Madina, after having emigrated from Makkah,

that the Jews were a nation living with the Muslims and that he acknowledged their right to believe in their faith.

4- In her book **Allah is Completely Different,** the German Orientalist, Sigrid Hunke refutes the accusations that Islam was spread by the sword. She wrote: "The tolerance of the Arabs played an important role in the spreading of Islam, contrary to what has been falsely people claimed that it was spread by fire and the sword. which is an unjust and unverified accusation a$_2$ainst Islam." She also wrote: "Christians, Jews. Sabians. and Pagans embraced Islam of their own free will.

It is a well-known fact that Muslim armies never invaded South Asia or West Africa, yet Islam spread and flourished in these countries after Muslim merchants traveled with their merchandise to these countries. Muslim Sufis with their peaceful attitude also impressed the inhabitants of these lands. The natives of these distant countries saw for themselves the conduct, morals. and dealings of the Muslims. and accordingly. embraced Islam of heir own Free will.[1]

(2) Were the Islamic Conquests a form of colonization?

[1] Zakzouk. M. Hamdy. Islam in the Mirror of Western Thought, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Aeaby. 1994.

1- Islamic conquests were by no means a form of colonization. Colonization is based on plundering the wealth and the agricultural and in Industrial resources of the occupied country. It also neglects developing its economy, its culture. and its civilization. History bears witness that Muslim conquerors were never unjust and their rule was always based on equity and tolerance. Andalusia, which is an European county, flourished during the Muslim reign and prospered in all walks of life, and was superior to other European countries in every aspect as a result of the cultural and scientific progress introduced by the Arabs. The same applies to every country during the Arab rule.
The relics of architecture and other manifestations of the Islamic civilization can still be seen.
2- The tribute imposed on the inhabitants of the occupied lands were taxes which they paid to be protected by the Islamic State against their enemies. Any person who enlisted in the ranks of the army was immediately exempted from this financial obligation.
Sir Thomas Arnold stated that the Christian tribe of Al-Jarajima that dwelt near to Antioch and was at peace with the Muslims, vowed to be their allies during peace and that in the event of war, they would fight side by side with them provided that they be

exempted from paying the tribute.[1]

Fighting in the cause of God in order to acquire the spoils of war is prohibited in Islam and is considered a crime. The Prophet was once asked about his opinion of a person who fights in the cause of God in order to acquire the spoils of war. He answered: "He is denied the divine reward". He repeated this statement twice, thus uttering it three times in order to emphasize it.[2]

3- The allegation that Muslim Conquests were an economically motivated form of colonization is an attempt to conceal the West's colonization of Islamic countries in the modern time. There is a great difference between the latter and the former, and the following example, among many others, should clarify this point. A peace treaty was signed between Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed and the inhabitants of the towns near to Al-Hira, which stated: "If we Muslims protect you from your enemies you will pay the tribute, otherwise you are exempted from it". When the Muslims were unable to protect these occupied Syrian towns during the rule of Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, the Rightly-Guided Caliph, after the Emperor Hercules had prepared a great army to

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[1] Arnold, Thomas W., The Preaching of Islam. Translation by Hassan Ibrahim et al. Egyptian Renaissance Bookshop, Cairo. Pp. 79 and 80.

[2] Al-Ghazali Muhammad; One Hundred Questions about Islam. Vol. 2. Thabit Publishing House, 1984. P. 42.

attack the Muslims, Khalid Ibn Al-Waleed wrote to the inhabitants of the Syrian cities stating: "Since the Emperor Hercules has prepared a great army to attack us, we must face him and will not be able to defend you, so we return your money to you. Should God grant us victory, the terms of the treaty will remain.[1]

3) What was Islam's attitude towards the ancient civilizations, and was Islam responsible for the burning of the Library of Alexandria?

1- The claim that Muslims do not respect the ancient civilizations is a false and unjust allegation. In fact they benefited from the positive aspects of these civilizations and translated many Greek, Persian, and Indian books into Arabic, solemnly believing that human heritage includes the skills, the experience, and the learning of different nations, all of which should be employed for the benefit of mankind. In this respect the Prophet said: "Seek knowledge even if it is in China". This means that one should seek to acquire knowledge even in a land that does not believe in one's faith and even if it were at the other end of the world, Since at that time China was considered the most distant place on earth.

2- The Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd explained thc

[1] Arnold. Sir Thomas. The Preaching of Islam. P. 79.

Muslims' attitude towards the ancient civilizations in thc following passage. "The religion or Islam urges us to read the books of the civilizations that preceded us provided that their am was to guide people to the truth which our faith urges us to follow. This includes the use of our powers of comprehension and reasoning in studying all created beings". Ibn Rushd then added: "We must study and understand what they wrote in their books. It is then up to us to accept what is consistent with our beliefs and to be grateful to them. However, whatever is no consistent with our beliefs should not confuse us, but we should reject it, warn others about it, and not blame their in any way".[1]

3- It is a historical fact the Muslims did not set fire to the Library of Alexandria. This unjust and unfounded accusation has been ascribed to the Muslims by the enemies of Islam who spread this rumor, which was confirmed in peoples' minds as if it were an established fact. This false accusation was spread during the thirteenth century A.D. as a result of the aggressive attitude of the Crusaders, and it is still repeated up to this very day in spite of the authentic proof of objective historians who have refuted it.

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[1] Ibn Rushed. The Philosophy of Ibn Rushed,. Beirut. 1982. P. 17.

This false allegation states that Omar lbn Al-Khattab, the second Rightly-Guided, Caliph gave the order to set fire to the Library. He was also falsely accused of having said that if the books in the library contained what was written in the Qur'an, then they were useless and if these books contained any contradiction to what was written in Qur'an, then they must be destroyed. It has been proved beyond a shadow of doubt that 'Omar never made such a statement. Another accusation which is equally false and unjust is that the Muslim Arabs used the books in library as fuel for the public baths for six whole months.

4- Sigrid Hunke presented documentary evidence in her books **Allah is Completely Different,** proving that the Arabs entered Alexandria in the year 642 A.D. and that there had been no library in Egypt then, since the library had been burned and destroyed centuries before that date.

She also added that there were no public baths in Egypt that era. Sigrid Hunke stated that the old library annexed to the academy founded by Ptolomy the First (Soter) about the year 300 B.C. was burned in the year 47 B.C. when Julius Caesar besieged the city. The library was later rebuilt by Cleopatra, who furnished it with books from Bergamun.

5- The third century A.D. witnessed the beginning of the organized destruction of the Library of

Alexandria. Emperor Caracalla suspended the Academy, and religious Fundamentalists set fire to the library, which they considered to be a manifestation of Paganism. In the year 391 A.D. Patriarch Theophilos obtained the permission of Emperor Theodosios to destroy what remained of the Academy and to set fire to the annexed library, which at that time contained three hundred thousand scrolls, in order to found a church and a monastery in its place. Destruction of the library was resumed in the fifth century A.D. during the attack launched upon the Pagan men of learning and scholars and their places of worship in addition to the destruction of their library.[1]

The aforementioned facts prove that the allegations concerning setting fire to the Library of Alexandria were spread in order to distort the image of Islam so that the Muslims would appear to be the enemies of learning and civilization, when in fact they were completely innocent of the crime they had been accused of.[2]

(4) What is the truth regarding Muslim wars (jihad)?

1- The Western world has misinterpreted Muslim fighting against aggression as being a Holy War. The

[1] Hunke, Sigrid, Allah ist ganz anders. Pp. 85-90

[2] Zakzouk. M. Hamdy. Islam in the Mirror of Western Thought. P. 110.

truth is that Islam does not acknowledge the term "Holy War". Islam regards wars as being either unjust or just. The word "Jihad" is derived from the word "Juhd" which means exerting one's utmost efforts, which are divided into two forms, the first is the effort made by one's soul and the second is the effort made in fighting a just and righteous war. The first strenuous effort that is made is titled the Greater Jihad by which one endeavours to repel all evil, temptation, and to purify one's soul from vice especially vice of jealousy, envy, and hatred, thereby deserving to be brought into the Grace of God. The other form of Jihad is known as the Lesser Jihad and it means fighting a just and righteous war.

2- A righteous, just war according to the laws of Islam is a war of defense, the aim of which is to repel the enemy's attack or assault, and the following Qur'anic verses permit Muslims to fight the enemy who attacks them: "To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged". [22/39] Also: "Fight in the cause of God those who light you, but do not transgress limits, for God does not love transgressors". [2/190] This Qur'anic verse proves that despite the permission to fight in self-defense, the Muslims were warned not to go beyond defending themselves to the extent of transgression. The following Qur'anic verse permits the Muslims to attack those

who attack them: "If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against you, transgress likewise against him". [2/194]
Islam's extreme aversion to fighting and bloodshed is obviuos, and fighting in self-defence is the exception that is permitted, "Fighting is prescribed for you, and you dislike it". [2/216]. Thus beginning an attack on others is not permitted in Islam.
3- Although Jihad means fighting in defence of the Faith and the Muslims, this Jihad is not limited to fighting in a battle. It includes Jihad with one's wealth, one's thought, or any other means which helps repel any attack or assault, in order to protect the Islamic community and the Faith in which the believe.

Such a principle is the legitimate right of every nation and had been sanctioned by international agreements in modern times.
4- If the Muslim learn that their enemy desires peace and willing to cease all forms of aggression, Islam commands the Muslims to agree to their enemy's request. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "But if the enemy incline towards peace, you (also) incline towards peace and trust in God." [8/61]
Furthermore, Islam calls for peaceful coexistence with others and establishing good will with them provided that they do not attack the Muslims. The Qur'anic verses urge the Muslims to treat these

people fairly justly and benevolently: "God forbids you not in regard to those who do not fight you for (your) Faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just". [60/8] thus the aim of Islam is to spread and establish peace and tolerance among people and to urge them to cooperate with each other for the welfare of mankind.
Therefore, the allegations you find in some international mass media that Islam is a religion which preaches aggression, extremism, fanaticism and terrorism are completely unjustified accusations, which have absolutely no foundation in Islam. Islam is, on the contrary, a religion of mercy and justice. We shall explain this in greater detail in our following expositions.

(5) What are Islam's rulings regarding fanaticism and terrorism?

1- Islam is against any form of bigotry and accordingly, does not urge its followers to dogmatism. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any kind in the sources of Islam. namely the Qur'an and the Traditions of the prophet, to that effect. The call to embrace Islam is stated in the Qur'an is based on a wise and eloquent invitation, and such conduct can never be considered a manifestation of bigotry: "Invite all to the Way of Your God with wisdom and

beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious". [16/125] The Prophet himself said to the Pagans of Makkah who refused to believe the Faith of Islam: "To you be your faith and to me faith," [109/6]

2- As regards the divine religions which were revealed before Islam, Muslims are instructed to believe in Prophets that preceded Muhammad. and this belief in them is an essential element in the Faith of Islam. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Say: We believe in God and in the revelation given to us, and to Ibrahim, lsma'il, Ishaq, Ya'qoub, and the Tribes and that given to Mousa and that given to (all) Prophets from their God; we make no difference between one and another of them and we bow to God in Islam". [2/l 36] This verse states that there is to be no discrimination between any prophets and this tolerance has no parallel in any other religion. How can such a religion be accused of bigotry and fanaticism?

3- Islam calls upon all people to become united and to live together in friendship and affection despite the differences between them: "O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other". [49/13] Similarly, Islam invites its followers in explicit terms to live in peace with Non-Muslims as is clear from the following

Qur'anic verse: "God forbids you not in regard to those who do not fight you to (your) Faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for God loves those who are just". [60/8].

4-Islam urges Muslims to forgive and pardon those who wrong them: "And the remission is the nearest to righteousness". [2/237] Furthermore, Islam urges Muslims to meet any wrong with kindness in the hope that an enemy may become a friend: "Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better: then will he between whom and you was hatred, become as if be were your friend and intimate!"[41/34]

5-The Prophet said in one of his Sayings: Announce good news and glad tidings and do not repel or alienate people". This is clearly a call to reject bigotry, which breeds hatred, whereas the announcement of good news and glad tidings is a sign of tolerance and leniency.

Since Islam condemns fanaticism and extremism it consequently condemns terrorizing and killing people. In fact Islam considers an attack on one single person an attack on all mankind: "If anyone slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people." [5/32]

6- Accordingly, accusing Islam of terrorism is an

absolutely unfounded allegation. If some Muslims are fanatics or even terrorists that does not mean that Islam should be held responsible for their actions. It is essential to differentiate between the tolerant teachings and just principles of Islam and the irresponsible and bigoted behaviour of some Muslims. We must all keep in mind that bigotry and fanaticism arc not limited to the followers of any one religion and that terrorism has become at international phenomenon and problem, and this is a fact which is witnessed by our contemporary world. How then can the Faith of Islam be blamed for the universal phenomenon of terrorism, which exists among thc followers of all faiths?

(6) Does Islam encourage extremism and violence?

1- Islam is a Faith of mercy and tolerance that advocates justice and peace. Islam also preserves and safeguards man's freedom, honour, and dignity. These are not slogans but are the principles upon which Islam is founded. God Almighty sent his Prophet Muhammad: "As a Mercy for all creatures". [21/107] The Prophet Muhammad also said: "I have been sent to fulfil the perfection of high moral qualities". Islam grants man the freedom of choice, even in matters of choosing to believe in God or refusing to do so:" Let him who will, believe, let him

who will, reject (it)". [18/29]
The invitation to embrace Islam is based upon convincing people by preaching graciously to them and by able amicable discussions and not by any form of force or compulsion. The Faith of Islam commands Muslims to be just and liberal and prohibits injustice, tyranny, corruption, and evil deeds, and advocates repelling evil with goodness: "Repel (Evil) with what is better". [4l/34]. When the Prophet Muhammad triumphed over the people of Makkah, he pardoned them, in spite of their previous injustice and persecution of him and his companions, saying "You are all absolutely free".
2- There is a definite compatibility between the Faith of Islam and Peace. In Arabic, the two words "Islam" and "Salaam", the latter being the Arabic word for peace, are derived from the same root. God Almighty describes himself in the Qur'an as "Peace". The Muslim greeting is also a greeting of peace, which is a continual reminder that peace is one of Islam's principal aims that should always be kept in mind. Every Muslim concludes his prayers five times a day with the greetings of peace to half the world on his right and then repeats it to the other half of the world on his left.
3- It is obvious from the aforementioned facts that Islam is a peace-loving Faith and accordingly, there is no possibility of its advocating violence,

fanaticism, bigotry, terrorism, or any form of assault on people and their property. Islamic rulings and principles aim at safeguarding the Human Rights, which include his right to life, family, beliefs, thought, and property.

The Faith of Islam prohibits any form of assault on others, so much so that Islam declares that attacking one individual of the human race is considered an attack on all mankind, and this is expressed in the following Qur'anic verse: "If anyone slew a person - unless, it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people; and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people". [5/34] Thus every individual represents humanity, and Islam's concern for the safeguarding and preservation of humanity is manifested in every human being's respect for other human beings by respecting their freedom, their dignity, and all their human rights. One of the Sayings of the Prophet states that every Muslim is forbidden to shed the blood, steal the wealth, or disgrace the honour of any Muslim. Another Saying of the Prophet states that whoever terrorizes a believer in God will not be delivered from the Terror of the Day of Judgement.

The Faith of Islam also calls for peaceful coexistence among nations and commands Muslims to treat Non-Muslims justly and fairly as is stated in

the following Qur'anic verse: "God forbids you not in regard to those who do not fight you for (your) Faith, nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them, for God loves those who are just". [60/8]

4- The responsibility of preserving the safety of the members of any community must be shared by everyone in the community. Shouldering this responsibility together is the only way to ensure security and stability in face of the danger of corruption and depravity. Another or the Sayings of the Prophet compares us all to a group of people who drew lots to see where they would be seated aboard a ship. The result was that some of them stayed on deck while others went down inside the ship. When the people inside the ship wanted water to drink, they went up to the people on deck and told them that they could get water to drink by making a hole in the bottom of the ship, which was their own part of the ship, and by so doing they would not harm the deck of the ship or the people on it. If the people on deck had allowed them to do that, they would all have perished, but if they had prevented them, would all have been delivered from drowning.

CHAPTER FOUR
Islam and Issues Concerning the Individual

(1) What is the relationship between God and man in Islam

1- God created man and established him as His vicegerent on earth and made the universe with its heavens and earth and all that lies between them subservient to him and instructed him to populate the earth. This indicates that God intended that man should be the master in this universe, but at the same time he should not forget that God created him. In this sense only is he a slave to God, his Creator whom he is expected to serve as one who worship Him and not as a servile or abject slave. God Almighty gave man the freedom of choice between obeying Him or disobeying Him, between believing in Him or rejecting His Faith and this is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)". [18/29] Freedom of choice is the opposite of slavery Man has always been granted the right and freedom of choosing his way in life and is consequently responsible for his actions: "if any one does a righteous deed, it is for the benefit of his own soul; and if he does evil, it works against (his own soul). "[45/l5] 2- God has honoured man and preferred him

to many of His creatures as is stated in: "We have honoured the sons of Asam". [17/70] This honour with which God has blessed man is the exact opposite of servility, and when God created man and breathed into him of His spirit, he ordered the angels to prostate themselves before him: "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of My Spirit, fall down in obeisance unto him". [15/29] In this process of divine spiritual animation lies the intimate relationship between man and his Creator, and every human being retains within his soul the essence of this divine process which always assures him that he is in the Divine presence of God, wherever may be: "And He is with you where so ever you may be" [57/4]

3- The Qur'an also assures us that God Almighty nearer to man than his own jugular vein. [50/4] and that He is always near to him and that He answers the prayers of every person who invokes Him [2/186] and that His Mercy extends to all things [7/l56] and that He is Most Merciful, Although God Almighty has been described in the Qur'an as being All-Compelling once and as being the Supreme Controlling Power twice and as being Irresistible six times, He has been described as being the Most Gracious and Beneficent fifty-seven times and as being the Merciful one hundred and fourteen times, in addition to being described as the Most Merciful

of the merciful four times. God Almighty has also been described as kind and affectionate and the attribute of His Mercy has been mentioned innumerable times.
The aforementioned verses all prove the intimate relationship between man and his Creator for it is a relationship of proximity, mercy and response to man's prayers and invocations. God Almighty is more merciful and compassionate to His creatures than a mother is to her child and this mercy is felt by every Muslim in the depths of his heart.

(2) What are Islam's rulings regarding the human mind and intellect?

1- Islam is the only religion which has elevated the status of the human mind and declared its importance. The human mind is the faculty through which man can be charged with duty and responsibility. It is man's intellect that makes him acknowledge his Creator, the mysteries of creation, and the Supremacy of his Creator. The Qur'an addresses man's intellect and urges him to look at the Universe and meditate upon its existence in addition to studying it for the benefit of mankind and to strive to make the earth prosper and thrive. Moreover, there is nothing to indicate that Islam prohibits Muslims to use their sense of judgement or that it is against scientific or academic thought.

2- It behooves us to state that Islam commands man to use his faculties of thinking and reasoning: "Travel through the earth and see how God did originate creation". [29/20] Islam also blames those people who do not employ their intellectual faculties of thinking, reasoning, and meditating, and the Qur'an describes such people thus: "They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes herewith they see not and ears wherewith they hear not; they are like cattle - nay more misguided: for they are heedless of warning." [7/179] Furthermore, the Qur'an considers not using one's sense and reason a sin, and describe what will happen on the Day of Judgement to those who refused to believe in God: "They will further say: Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we would not (now) be among the companions of the Blazing Fire". [67/10]

3- The faith of Islam draws man's attention to the fact that God has made the entire universe subservient to him. It is consequently his duty to use his powers of intellect for the welfare of mankind and the fruitfulness of the earth. The following Qur'anic verses confirm this matter: "It is He Who has produced you from the earth and settled you therein". [11/61]; "And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect". [45/l3]

Therefore, the whole universe is a domain where man can exercise his powers of intellect without any prohibition or opposition to his thought provided that it, for the welfare of mankind. Everything that benefits mankind or entails prosperity and well being is encouraged by Islam.

4- The Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet are the two sources of the Faith of Islam, and to follow the religious rulings and observances stated in them is compulsory upon every Muslim. However, he is perfectly free to think, meditate, ponder, and study everything in the world in which he lives. This is what the Prophet referred to when he said: "You are better acquainted with the affairs of the world in which you live".

Freedom of thought and academic or scientific research is guaranteed by Islam, provided that it does not violate the sanctity of the Faith and its beliefs and divine texts such as the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet. Any attempt to change, distort, add, omit, or ridicule any of these holy texts is not only forbidden but is also an unforgivable sin. For the rest, everything in the world may be researched, studied, or investigated.

(3) Does the Faith or Islam advocate fatalism?

1- Anyone who reads and meditates upon the verses of the Qur'an shall realize that Islam is a religion that

urges man to action, for work is life and without work life shall cease to exist. Consequently, we find in many Qur'anic verses that God Almighty linked righteous deeds and true Faith. Righteous deeds are every good deed or act performed whether it be of a religious or a worldly nature which benefits mankind or repels evil: "And say: Work (righteousness); soon will God observe your work, and His Apostle and the believers (in the Faith)". [9/105]

The Qur'an urges people to work even on Fridays, the day of rest and worship of the Muslims: "And when the(Friday Noon) Prayer is finished, then you may dispense through the land and seek the Bounty of God". [62/10]

2- Prophet urged people to work until the last moment of their lives and till the end of the world. He is related to have said: "Should the last hour come upon you while you have a palm shoot in your hand that you are about to plant, plant it if you can". The Prophet also refused to approve of people who spent all day and night long praying in mosques and depending on others to provide for them and maintain them. He also praised and blessed the person who earned his livelihood from his own toil and he said that the hand that toils in labour is blessed by God and by His Apostle.

3- The Prophet, who is the ideal of all Muslims, as stated in Qur'an, used to work, plan, deliberate, and

prepare everything that was needed and then put his trust in God. Putting trust in God does not mean neglecting work and praying to God to fulfil our hope. The reason for is this that faith and trust in God is not only necessary but also obligatory, to remind us of God Almighty, which inspires us with a spiritual energy that enables us to overcome obstacles or problems with determination and resolution. This trust and dependence on God should be a strong and positive force and not a passive and an apathetic attitude.

Relying completely upon God, without making any effort to realize one's aims on the pretext that God's Will will be done as He Wills, is not accepted by Islam, for God does not assist a person who makes no effort to help himself. God, however, aids the person who strives to attain his aim: "Verily God will never change the condition of a people until they change it themselves".[13/11]

'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab expressed his great displeasure on concerning a group of men who spent all their time praying in a mosque and depending upon others to work to maintain them and he exclaimed: "The sky does not rain gold or silver". He supported his statement by relating one of the Sayings of the Prophet and said: "Do what birds do. They go out every morning with empty craws and return at the end of the day with full craws". People

should learn a lesson from the birds that go out every morning in search of food and return at the end of the day with full craws.

(4) What arc Islam's rulings on democracy and human rights?

1- Islam was the first religion to call for Human Rights emphasizing the necessity of safeguarding them. Any scholar of Islamic Legislation learns that it declares the fundamental Rights of Man, which include man's life, belief, opinions, wealth, and family, all of which are safeguarded by Islam. The history of Islam records 'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's decisive stand against the violation human rights when he said: 'Why do you enslave people after their mothers gave birth to them as free individuals?"

2- The Human Rights in Islam are based upon two fundamental principles:

(a) Equality among all human beings.

(b) Freedom, which is the right of every human being.

Islam bases equality on two foundations, namely that all human beings originated from the same human origin and human dignity, which is granted to all mankind.

As for the common origin of all mankind, Islam declares that God created mankind from one soul and hence all human beings are brothers and sisters

in one large family in which there is no room for privileges on account of wealth or status. The difference that exists between human beings does not affect their origin and essence which are one and the same. The differences that exist between human beings in the world should urge them to become acquainted with each other and to cooperate with one another in various walks of life: "O mankind ! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you. may know each other". [49/13]

The second foundation is that equality is based on the honour and dignity with which God Almighty graced all mankind: "We have honoured the sons of Adam". [17/70].

God made man a vicegerent on earth and ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam and made him a master in this universe. God also rendered all that is in the heavens and the earth subservient to man. These privileges honoured and elevated man above other created beings. God conferred this honour and dignity in principle on all human beings without exception so that it would immune and protect every single human being, for rich or poor, rulers or subjects, are all equal in the sight of God and in the eyes of the law.

The second principle upon which the Human Rights are founded in Islam is freedom. God created man as

a responsible human being for populating the earth and establishing civilization. Naturally, responsibility cannot exist without freedom even in the matter of the choice of believing in God or rejecting to believe in Him, which is left to man's free will: "Let him who will, believe, and let him who will reject (it)." [18/29]

Freedom includes all aspects of human freedom, whether religious, political, intellectual, or civilian matters.

3- Passing Judgement in Islam is based upon justice and consultation as is declared in the Qur'an: "And when you judge between man and man, judge with justice". [4/58] God Almighty ordered justice and benevolence in dealing with others: "God commands justice. the doing of good and liberality..." [l6/90] There are also many other verses in the Qur'an which illustrate this point.

As for consultation, it is a fundamental and obligatory principle in Islam. When the Prophet was not inspired by Divine Inspiration in any matter, he consulted his companions and acted according to the opinion of the majority, even if it were contrary to his own opinion. An example of this was the consultation concerning the Battle of Uhud. The Prophet was of the opinion that the Muslims should not set out to fight, yet he submitted to the opinion of the majority, who advocated fighting, and the

result was defeat. Despite this, the Qur'an emphasized the necessity of consultation and addressed the Prophet in the following Qur'anic verse: "So pass over (their faults) and ask for (God's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs."[3/159]

Accordingly, we must not be misled by the opinion held by a minority of jurists who maintain that consultation is not obligatory, since their opinion is inconsistent with the religious texts of the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet. Islam left to the judgement of the Muslims the method of consultation in keeping with the interests of the community. If the welfare of a Muslim nation should require that consultation should follow the acknowledged system currently practiced by modern nations, Islam does not object to that system, the application of which must necessarily take into account the circumstances of every era on the national and international levels.

The aforementioned facts illustrate the extent of Is1am's concern for safeguarding the Human Rights and the application of the principle of consultation or democracy as it is understood today.

4-Islam permitted people to have different Opinions and allowed interpretative judgement in religious matters provided that these people fulfilled the necessary qualifications to do so. Islam declares that

the person who uses his judgement in the matter and errs is rewarded by God, whereas he who uses his judgement and arrives at the correct result is doubly rewarded by God. The scholar of the doctrines of jurisprudence have come across many different opinions concerning many matters and nobody has ever claimed that a difference of opinion is prohibited by Islam.
Islam, therefore, allows the expression of differing opinions without any limitations, provided that they are sincerely concerned with the welfare, security, and peace of their community.

(5) What are Islam's rulings regarding art?
1- Islam is a religion that admires beauty, which exists everywhere. The Prophet himself once declared that God is perfection and that He loves beauty. Nevertheless, Islam gives priority to morals over beauty, and that in itself does not signify that Islam is against art. Islam thus considers that beauty should be based on morals. This is the attitude taken by Islam concerning all branches of art. Islam's criterion when judging any branch or work of art is based upon the rule that what is right is good and what is evil is wrong.
The Qur'an draws our attention in many verses to the beauty of the Universe and the perfection of its creation, which is admired by everyone who sees it.

[15/10; 16/6; 41/12] Accordingly, Islam does not condemn any branch or work of art if it is beautiful. However, should it display any form of moral or material repulsiveness, Islam condemns it.

2- If the aim of any work of art is to appeal to one's intellect and finer feelings, Islam naturally does not object to it. However, if it appeals to the carnal instincts of man and is not a manifestation of decent art, by spreading vice and by being an active factor in the deterioration of morals, Islam condemns it.

3- When musical melodies, singing, and the words of songs are refined and harmonious, they are approved by Islam provided that they do not induce the people who listen to them to succumb to any form of temptation forbidden by God. In other words, if art aspires to elevate the human emotions and the spirit of man, it is not only approved, but also admired. The Prophet admired the voice of Abu Mousa Al-Ash'ary when he recited the Qur'an. The Prophet also chose, from among his companions, those who were gifted with melodious voices to proclaim the time of prayer. He also listened to musical instruments such as the tambourine, the pipe, and the flute without making any remarks that could be interpreted as his dislike for music.

On the day of the Feast, Abu Bakr entered the Prophet's house and found his daugher 'Aisha, the Prophet's wife, listening to the singing of two

bondmaids who were also beating drums. When Abu Bakr objected the Prophet replied: "Leave them, Abu Bakr; today is the day of the Feast". The Prophet himself also asked his wife 'Aisha to send for someone to sing at the wedding procession of her relatives who was married to one of the inhabitants of Al-Madina. There were numerous occasions when the Prophet indicated that neither music nor singing are prohibited in Islam, unless they are accompanied by form of immorality or vice.[1]

4- Regarding dancing, Islam differentiates between men's dancing and women's dancing. For example, men dancing in a group is approved of by Islam, and the Prophet allowed his wife 'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, to watch a group of Abyssinians dancing on the day of the Feast. Women dancing before other women is permitted by Islam, but their dancing in front of men is prohibited in order to eliminate any possibility of temptation, that may lead to immorality.

5- Acting is not prohibited provided that it adheres to morality. No one can deny the important role played by the art of acting in its dealing with and treatment of many problems of the community. It also criticizes the vices rampant in society and presents solutions to many matters that concern the

[1] Al-Qardawi, The Permitted and the Prohibited, Qatar, 1978, p. 291. Also Al-Ghazali. M. One Hundred Questions about Islam. P. 174.

community. Also any form of reasonable entertainment that does not exceed the limits of decency is permitted by Islam. Photography is also permitted by Islam and has come to be a necessity in the world of today.

6- There are definite religious rulings that prohibit sculpture and statues. The reason for this prohibition goes back to the advent of Islam when most people worshipped idols. Islam feared that statues might be worshipped by those whose belief was superficial and that they might revert to the worship of idols.

Currently, such a possibility does not exist and consequently no sin is committed. However, in order that Islam may prevent a recurrence of what took place in the pre-Islamic era in the future or even in the distant future, has laid down its ruling, since it legislates for all generations and eras and what may seem impossible in one era may become a reality in another era be it sooner or later.

CHAPTER FIVE
Islam and Issues concerning the Muslim Woman

(1)Is it true that Islam treats the Muslim woman unjustly and deprives her of her rights?

1- Women in the Pre-Islamic era lived in servility and misery. They had no rights whatsoever until the advent of Islam, which liberated them and delivered them from the injustice which they had suffered for a long time. Islam elevated the status of women and granted them all the rights of which they had hitherto been deprived and granted them the rights accorded to men. It is interesting to note that the rights granted to women by Islam more than fourteen centuries ago are the very same rights granted to women by the United Nations in the 1948.

Declaration of human Rights. Islam also proved Eve's innocence of tempting Adam to disobey God's Command, and of being the cause of his banishment from Paradise. Islam also refuted the myth that Eve was the origin of evil in the world, stating that it was Satan who tempted both Adam and Eve. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Then did Satan make them slip from the (Garden) and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had [2/36].

2- Islam emphasizes the fact that all mankind, men

and women alike, were created from one single soul: "O mankind! reverence God your Creator, who Created you from a single person." [4/1] This Qur'anic verse signifies that men and women are both equal as human beings, and in this respect one is not superior to the other.

Furthermore, the honour that God has bestowed on mankind includes both men and women as is clear from the following Qur'anic verse: "We have honourd the descendants of Adam". [17/70] The descendants of Adam signify all mankind, and when the Qur'an refers to mankind, both men and women are addressed since when the Qur'an addresses one sex and not the other it addresses them as "O men!" (male) or "O women!".

3- The Prophet Muhammad described the relationship between men and women in the following Saying: "Women are the counterpart of men and they have the same rights as they have obligations in equity". The word "counterpart" indicates equality and that men and women are equal in God's sight and none is superior to the other except by virtue of their righteous deeds and piety. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Whoever works righteousness, man or woman, and has faith, verily them will We give a new life, a life that is good and pure and We will bestow on such their reward according best of their actions." [16/97]

God Almighty also responds to the prayers and invocations of men and women alike: "And their Creator has accepted and answered them: Never will I cause to be lost, the work of any of you, be you male or female: you are members of one another." [3/195] This means that men and women complement each other and that there would be no continuation of life in this world without their union.

4- After having read the aforementioned facts which are quoted from the two authentic sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet, can Islam still be accused of ill-treating and wronging women?

The problem is that some people unjustly misrepresent or confuse the difference between the principles and teachings of Islam, which are just and humane, and the conduct of some Muslims who treat women unjustly. Any objective, and unbiased judgement of Islam should differentiate between the two cases. The degraded status of women in some Muslim communities is due to the ignorance that prevails and is not the result of the teachings or principles of Islam.

We find in the national survey of the United States[1] that at least one in four women is physically assaulted by her male partner every year and that

[1] The Bettered Women, Identification and Intervention. The Female Patient, Total Health Care for Women, Vol. 19, No, 2 AMA/CM6 OB/Gyn. Edition, February 1994.

about 10% of abused women are victims of severe violence. In the Emergency Department Settings it is estimated that 20-35% of women patients seek treatment because of abuse and in family clinics between 25-40% of patients report being abused etc. Furthermore, it is well known that women were ill-treated in the Middle Ages in the West and that there was an old English proverb, which is still quoted:

"A woman, ass, and wallnut-tree, the more you beat, the better be" (an English saying, Oxford Dictionary).

(2) Are Muslim women always dominated by men?

1- Islam granted the Muslim woman total economic independence and gave her the right to manage her property, buy, sell, invest and donate money without her husband's permission, provided that she had the legal capacity to do so. Neither her husband nor any male relative had the right to take a single penny of her money without her consent.[1]

2- No man, not even a girl's father, can force daughter to marry a man against her will, and her consent to the marriage is essential. A young woman once went to the Prophet to complain that her father wanted to force her to marry her cousin (her father's

[1] In the sixties of the twentieth century, in the Province of Quebec, Canada, a man could sell his wife's property without her consent or power of attorney.

nephew) whom she detested and that her father wanted to gain an elevated status for himself by that marriage. The Prophet summoned the girl's father and told the girl in her father's presence that she was free to agree to the marriage or to refuse it. The girl agreed to the marriage of her own free will and said to the Prophet: "O Prophet of God! I now agree to what my father desires and I only wanted the girls and women to know that this is not a father's right!" She meant that fathers do not have the right to force their daughters to marry against their will.

3- A woman is a man's partner in the family and in bringing up their children, No family can be happy and successful without the positive cooperation of both the husband and wife, without which the life of the family would be unstable and the children would be the victims of these circumstances. The Prophet, blessings and peace be upon him, declared that men and women must both share responsibility when he said: 'You arc all guardians and you are all responsible for those whom you guard. A religious leader is responsible for his followers who adhere to his faith, and every man is responsible for his family, and every woman is responsible in her home and is responsible for her family.

The fact that a woman is held responsible for her family refutes her being dominated by men, since responsibility implies freedom, which is

incompatible with being dominated.
4- No man has the right to deprive a woman from exercising her legitimate rights in life nor has he the right to prevent her from going to the mosque to pray. The Prophet said: "Do not prevent the women of God from praying in the mosques of God".
If some Muslims do not abide by the Islamic rulings and laws concerning women that is due to their ignorance of the teachings of Islam or their misunderstanding of its just and humane principles.

(3) Why is a **Muslim woman's inheritance less than a man's inheritance?**
1- In the pre-Islamic era, women were deprived of the right of inheritance. However, with the advent of Islam, they were granted a definite share of the inherited estate, despite the opposition voiced by many Arabs at the time, who considered that the right to inheritance was a privilege for men since they defended the tribe and fought its enemies.
In most cases in Islam the male heir inherits double the inheritance of the female: 'God (thus) directs you as regards your children's (inheritance): to the male a portion equal to that of two females." [4/11] A hasty opinion on this matter may consider that such a ruling treats females unjustly for not granting them the same inheritance as males. However, the Faith of Islam is completely innocent of such an injustice,

since the difference in the inheritance of males and females has nothing to do with favouring males and is based upon the responsibilities which are obligatory for men and not for women.

2- According to Islamic Law it is a man's religious duty to maintain and provide for his wife, children, and her members of his family, which might include his father, mother, and brothers and sisters if they are not able support themselves. His wife, on the other hand, is not charged with any financial responsibilities, and she is not en financially responsible for herself, however wealthy she may be, and her husband is responsible for her maintenance. If we understand this, we will realize that when she inherits half of any inheritance, her financial position is still superior to a man's financial position.

There are certain cases referred to in the Qur'an and explained in detail in Islamic Law when the female's share of the inheritance equals that of the male. Such a case is when the deceased person, man or woman, is childless and both his or her parents are dead, and he or she leaves maternal brothers and/or sisters, each of whom receives an equal share of the inheritance. Furthermore, if a man's wife dies and has a daughter by him or by a former husband, the daughter inherits double what her father or step

father inherits.[1] The same rule applies to other cases and these shares are stated in the Our'an and leave no room for dispute among the heirs. Many Egyptian Christians go to the Egyptian Islamic centre for legal opinions in order to follow the Islamic system of inheritance which settles all disputes between the heirs.

(4) Why is a Muslim woman's testimony in court not considered equal to a man's testimony?

1- Islam does not consider the testimony of one man equal to the testimony of two women in all matters. There are cases when the testimony of men is not accepted in matters that specifically concern women. This signifies that the testimony is not based upon the sex of the witness but on his or her experience and knowledge.

2- When we are concerned with affairs that entails purchasing, selling, and financial transactions, we realize that, generally speaking, women's experience is limited when compared to that of men, who spend most of their time looking after their trade. Accordingly, the rule applies in such cases, since the experience of one man is equal to the experience of two women. Thus it is not a matter of lack of confidence in women or considering them inferior to

[1] Sabeq. Sayed: Jurisprudence of the Traditions of the Prophet, Beirut, Vol. 9. P. 615.

men, but it is a matter of one's experience in the dealings of life, and a judge has the right to accept the testimony of one woman if he deems it fit to do so. Furthermore, no judge would accept the testimony of an illiterate, inexperienced man and refuse the testimony of an educated woman who is successful in her career.

3- A most important factor in this matter is the biological aspect, namely the physiological phases through which women pass. These phases, in most cases, influence women's behaviour, disposition, and memory. Women are more emotional and highly strung than men and they might be emotionally influenced by the position of a person on trial and might sympathize with him or her and that might unintentionally influence their testimony. The Our' an stated that if there were two women witnesses and one of them forget point or was mistaken concerning it, the other woman could remind her or correct her. This is stated in verse 282 of Sura Two of the Qur'an: "If one of them errs, the other can remind her."

(5) Does Islam prohibit Muslim women from holding key positions in the state?

1- Islam does not deprive women of the right to be appointed in key positions in the state. A Muslim woman has the right to be appointed in posts that

suit her nature, experience, and qualifications. The Saying of the Prophet which some Muslim scholars considered as being a prohibitive rule against women being appointed in key positions was: "Unsuccessful shall be those who are ruled by a woman". This referred to the daughter of Kisra, the Emperor of Persia, whom the Persians had crowned as their ruler. This Saying was misinterpreted by some jurists who believed that it applied to all women in all high positions.

It behaves us to remember that in Sura 27 of the Quran, the Queen of Sheba was praised for her wisdom and discretion. This praise indicates the extent of Islam's respect for a woman who was the queen of her country.

2- Many Muslim Jurists in different eras regarded women who had careers or who were engaged in any activity with respect and admiration. The religious leader Ibn Hazem considered that women had the right to be rulers of a state.

The famous Islamic scholar Abu Hanifa was of the same opinion as Ibn Hazm. As for the religious leader Ibn Jareer Al-Tabari, he declared that a woman is entitled to be a judge in all matters that are judged by a man with no exceptions. It has also been reported that the second Rightly-Guided Caliph, 'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, appointed Al-Shafa', daughter of Abdullah Al Makhzoomiyya as a judge

of the prices and the weights and measures used in the market of the city, and this religious and civil post demanded experience and acuity.[1]

3- Although Islam does not deprive women of holding key positions in the state if they are qualified, women should not neglect their primary responsibilities towards their families, namely their husbands and children, since the family is the foundation of society, and the destruction of the family institution leads to the destruction of the whole society. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary for a woman who is successful in her career to attend to all her responsibilities and duties in her home, as a wife and a mother, for the welfare of her family and for that of society in general.

(6) Does Islam command the Muslim woman to wear a veil, and what are Islam's rulings on a woman's right to an education and a career?

1- The attire that Islam imposes upon the Muslim woman is that she appears in a decent and respectable mien in order to save her from any unpleasant remarks or from being harassed by irresponsible youths or men. Thus the Muslim attire for women is to safeguard their honour and dignity and does not hinder their movement or activity.

[1] Al-Qaedawi, Yusuf. Contemporary Opinion, Dar Afaq Al-Gadd, 1978. P.63 / and Ghazali, Muhammad, One Hundred Questions about Islam, Vol. 2. Pp. 260, 262 and 276.

Islam does not command women to cover their faces with a veil or to wear gloves, and this custom belongs to certain communities for which Islam is in no way responsible.

Conservative and decorous attire is not only a virtue of Islam, for it is also considered a virtue in Christianity. Christian nuns wear clothes that cover their hair and their body, leaving only their faces and hands uncovered, and the Gospel commands women to cover their hair when praying.[1] Furthermore, when a woman, irrespective of her status, whether she be the wife of the Head of a Western state or a famous film star, is admitted into the presence of the Pope in the Vatican, she must cover her hair.

2- Islam definitely does not deprive women of an education. On the contrary, it urges both men and women alike to seek knowledge and acquire learning. The Prophet said: "Seeking knowledge is an obligation imposed upon every Muslim man and woman". The history of Islam records the achievements of many women who excelled in religious sciences, literature, and poetry. When the Prophet married Hafsa, who had just begun to study the rudiments of reading and writing, he entrusted Al-Shafaa' Al'Adawiyya to teach her to improve her handwriting and reading.

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[1] First Epistle of Pau, the Apostle to the Corithians, Chapter II

'Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's wife, was far more learned than many of the Companions of the Prophet, who recommended that she should be consulted on religious matters, for she was very well versed in all branches of religion, in addition to her knowledge of literature and the principles of the lineage of the Arab tribes, which was a recognized science in that era.

3- Islam does not prevent any woman from working and having a career. She has the right to work provided that she needs to work and that she chooses the type of work which suits her experience, ability, and qualifications. There are no religious laws, which prevent a woman from being educated or from working. During the lifetime of the Prophet many women were engaged in various activities such as assisting the troops during the battles and treating the wounded, in addition to carrying water and food to the men who were fighting.

4- It is essential to differentiate between the laws of Islam, which safeguard and protect the dignity and safety of women, and the ancient pre-Islamic traditions and customs, which prevented women from being educated or taking part in any activities? Islam, which honours women and grants them their due, is concerned with the development of a woman's character, since that enables her to be a more capable and efficient mother and wife who will

accordingly be able to play her role in raising a strong generation capable of developing their society, thus increasing the welfare of community.

7) Is the Islamic attire for women unsuitable for modern life?

1- Every nation has its own distinct character and way of life. It has its traditional meals, drinks, attire, and architecture. All this reflects the nations' culture civilization, and beliefs. God has created people different from each other in many aspects, and nations also differ from each other, and this difference will continue until the end of the world. Furthermore, what suits and pleases one nation might not suit or be accepted by another. For example, Indian women wear the sari and this attire is not criticized by the western world although the sari is not practical in modem life. The sari is worn by all women in India and the late Mrs. Indira Ghandi, former Prime Minister of India, also wore it and nobody ever objected it and claimed that it prevented Indian woman from pursuing their careers or that it hindered their ability to productive citizens.

2- Most European women until the beginning of the twentieth century, wore clothes that reached the ground and they all wore hats or some form of head-dress when they went outside the house, yet nobody ever criticized this. The style of women's clothes

developed year after year until it reached its current style, which is no longer subject to any rules and it will continue to change according to the ideas and whims of those responsible the fashion of women's clothes.

3- Islam does not impose any particular style of attire on Muslim women other than its being decorous so that she would not subject herself to the harassment of any irresponsible youth. Furthermore, this decotous and respectable attire does not hinder the Muslim woman in any kind of post or work which she practices. Women in all walks of life wearing the Islamic attire are officials in factories, companies, departments of Ministries, schools, and colleges of the universities. They perform their duties just as efficiently as their colleagues who wear European-fashioned clothes. The accusation is completely groundless and no study has ever been made to try and prove this ridiculous allegation. The fact is that the western world would like to prove that their way of life, customs, traditions, and fashions are more suitable than all other customs and traditions, and this in itself is against the law of nature since every nation has its own distinctive character. The Muslim woman has the right to be proud of her distinctive character, which is reflected in her attire and her conduct in the same way that Indians and Europeans have that right.

4- Currently, there are many Muslim women dressed in the Islamic attire who hold high-ranking positions in their countries and execute their work in the best possible manner. Mrs. Benazeer Bhutto, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, wears clothes similar to the Islamic attire and nobody ever accused her of not being efficient in performing her duties. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh is another example of a Muslim woman who wears clothes similar to the Islamic attire.

(8) Why does Islam permit polygamy?

1- Islam was by no means the first religion to permit polygamy, nor did Islam introduce it. On the contrary, Islam was the first religion to organize marriage and to limit the number of wives according to strict stipulations. In the pre-Islamic era, polygamy was practiced not only by the Arabs but also by many other nations all over the world.

The abolition of unjust and brutal customs practiced for generations by issuing one command is an impossibility. Islam took this into consideration and made a series of laws by which it was able to enforce a gradual abolition of he hitherto unlimited number of wives that men were allowed to marry.

2- Islam limited the number of wives to four: "Marry women of your choice, two, or three, or four.." [4/3] There was, however, an important condition which

had to be considered before marrying more than one wife, namely treating the wives equally. The Prophet warned men against not treating wives equally by saying that he who has two wives and does not treat them equally will pay dearly for this sin on the Day of Judgement.

3- The following Qur'anic verse states that treating one's wives equally is a very difficult matter and that however conscientiously a person tries to do so he will never be able to treat them equally: "You are never able to be fair and just as between women, even if it is your ardent desire." (4/129)

Thus since equal treatment of wives is impossible, however hard a person tries, a man should marry only one wife and this is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "But if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them) then only one." [4/3]

It behaves us to note that this religious law was enforced more than fourteen centuries ago.

It is evident from the aforementioned facts that Islam neither introduced nor enforced polygamy, since it was a deeply rooted system which had existed before the advent of Islam. Islam dealt with the matter in a practical manner without causing a violent reaction among the community. This indicates that in Islam monogamy is the rule and polygamy the exception. Islam permitted this exception in certain cases such as during and after battles in which many men were

killed leaving widows and orphans without any means of support. Consequently, marriage to such women is a virtue for it not only provides them with a decent life but also prevents them from falling into sin.

If a woman is afflicted with a chronic disease which makes her unable to perform her marital obligations or if she is barren, the husband under these circumstances is permitted to marry another wife who will be entitled to the rights of the first wife. The Faith of Islam has permitted the exception of polygamy for the aforementioned justifiable reasons in order to prevent the possibility of sinful relationships and the disturbing consequences that ensue, whereas such illicit relationships are not condemned in the western world.

(9) Is prohibiting a Muslim woman from marrying non-Muslim a sign of discrimination between thc sexes?

1- It is true that Islam permits Muslims to marry non-Muslim women (Jews or Christians) whereas Muslin women are not granted that right. This would seem to signify a lack of the principle of equality, but when one understands Islam's point of view in this respect, one realizes that all Islamic legislation is based upon thc consideration of the welfare of all concerned.

Marriage in Islam is based upon affection and compassion as well as emotional well-being. Islam aims at ensuring that this matrimonial union is built on a solid foundation that guarantees its continuity and success. Furthermore, the Faith of Islam respects other divine religions and commands Muslims to believe in all God's prophets as an integral element in the Faith of Islam.

when a Muslim marries a Christian or a Jewish woman he is commanded by Islam to respect her religious beliefs and must not prevent her from performing her religious rites and prayers, nor is he permitted to prevent her from attending her religious observances in the church or the synagogue.

This respect of the wife's religion ensures the welfare of the family, which is Islam's everlasting aim.

3- Should a non-Muslim marry a Muslim woman the element of respect due to Islam would not exist, for although all Muslims respect the other divine Faiths and believe in all the prophets of God, non-Muslims do not believe in Islam nor in the Prophet Muhammad, and in most cases believe the false allegations against Islam and the Prophet Muhammad. Even if the non-Muslim husband does not declare his opinion concerning these false allegations, his Muslim wife would give in an atmosphere that would be married by her knowledge

or even suspicion that her husband does not respect her Faith. The principle of mutual respect between husband and wife, which is the basis of marriage, would consequently not exist in such a situation and would lead either to divorce or an unhappy married life.

When Islam forbade marriage between Muslims and women who did not believe in God, namely infidels, pagans, Magians and the like, this prohibition was based upon the same logical reason for which Islam prohibited a Muslim woman from marrying a non-Muslim.

A Muslim man believes in all the divine religions and respects them but he disdains all religions that do not believe in God. If he married a wife who followed one of these faiths that worshipped idols, he could not possibly respect his wife's faith, and that would definitely lead to a strained atmosphere where the emotions of affection and compassion could not exist, thus destroying the foundation of the marriage.

CHAPTER SIX
Issues concerning Freedom of Belief, the Unit" of Islamic Nations and the Backwardness of Some Islamic Nations

(1) Is Islam opposed to the freedom of belief?

1- Islam guarantees the freedom of belief and this is verified in the following Qur'anic verse: "Let there be no compulsion in religion". [2/256] Accordingly, no one is forced to renounce his religion in favour of another faith. One's freedom to adhere to the religion of one's choice establishes the base of his belief, and this is emphasized in the following Qur'anic verse: "let him who will, believe, and let him who will, reject (it)." [18/29]

Declaring the freedom of belief means accepting that there is more than one religion. This was stressed by the Prophet in the first Constitution of the Islamic State in Al-Madina when he acknowledged Judaism and declared that the Jews and the Muslims in AI-Madina formed one nation.

An example of Islam's granting freedom of belief is 'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's treatment of the Christians of Jerusalem whom he guaranteed the safety of their lives, their churches, and their crosses, assuring them that none of them would be harmed on account of his religion.

3.Islam also grants freedom of thought and opinion

provided that discussions on religion are of an objective nature and are not a pretext for abuse and ridicule. This is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: "Invite (all) to the way of your Creator with wisdom and beautiful preaching: and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious." [16/125] In the light of this tolerance, discussions may take place between Muslims and non-Muslims. The Qur'an invites the Muslims to discuss matters with the people of the Book in the following Qur'anic verse: "O people of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God; that we associate no partners with Him; that we elect not from among ourselves lords and patrons other than God. If then they turn back, say: 'Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims (bowing to the will of God)'. [3/ 64] This verifies that should the discussion between both parties fail to accomplish its aim, each person is entitled to adhere to the faith in which he believes. This is also what the following Qur'anic verse expressed concerning Prophet Muhammad's final remarks to the pagans Makkah, namely: "you have your religion and I have mine." [109/6]

4. Belief is based upon one's conviction, and sincere belief is therefore based on indisputable conviction and is not the result of blind imitation or compulsion. Every individual is free to choose or

adopt the faith in which he believes and to exercise his free thought even if he is an atheist. No one has the right to interfere with his beliefs provided that he keeps his beliefs to himself and does not spread them among the people in order to confuse them regarding their moral values. If he deliberately does so, and spreads his false beliefs which reject the beliefs of the people, he will have opposed the regime of the state in which he lives and will have stirred sedition in the hearts of the people. Any person who acts in such a manner will be accused of treason and sentenced to death.

The execution of a person who renounces his faith in Islam is not just due to the renouncing of his religion in which he had believed of his own free will, but is also the punishment for inciting sedition against the established religious authority of the Islamic state.

If he should renounce his religion without spreading his views among the people and without shaking the people's belief, he is immune against all harm.

Some Muslim scholars are of the opinion that the person who renounces his faith does not meet his punishment in this world, but would be punished in the Hereafter on the Day of Judgement. They also declared that the execution of those who renounced Islam, according to the sayings of the Prophet, was not for renouncing Islam, but for being enemies of

Islam who had fought the Muslims on the battlefield.[1]

(2) Is the Muslims' attitude towards Salman Rushdy a manifestation of Islam's opposition to the freedom of thought?

1. Freedom of thought and expression is one of the rights guaranteed by Islam, since the entire universe with the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them innspires thought and meditation as is expressed in the following Qur'anic verse: "and He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the Heavens and on earth; behold, in that are signs indeed for those who reflect.[45/13].

The Qur'an reproaches those who do not employ their mental and intellectual faculties and considers them to be of a level lower than that of animals. The Qur'an contains many verses urging people to acquire knowledge and to exercise their intellectual faculties and their powers of reasoning. The Qur'an also orders people to populate the earth and to do their utmost to make it prosper for the welfare of all mankind. People are religiously obliged to think, reflect, and meditate upon the universe that surrounds them. Islam encourages freedom and expression of thought provided that it promotes the

[1] Al Sa'eedy, Abdul Mit'al. Freedom of Religious Thought in Islam, Dar Al-Fikr Al-Aeaby, Second Edition, pp. 3, 72, and 88.

welfare of humanity.
2. Every nation has its own sacred values which it reveres and its inherent beliefs to which it adheres, all of which leave a decisive mark upon the nation's culture. Ridiculing these values and beliefs is the same as ridiculing the whole nation and its regime.
Every nation is entitled to protect its values and beliefs and to defend itself against any form of sacrilege. This explains the hostile attitude of Muslims towards Salman Rushdy, for they believe that he has trampled upon their sacred beliefs which they value and that he has insulted their Prophet. Naturally, their attitude towards Salman Rushdy is fully justified.
3. It is, therefore, evident that the issue concerning Salman Rushdy has no bearing whatsoever upon the principle of the freedom and expression of thought but that it is the manifestation of the freedom of slandering, abusing, and insulting if we are to give it its true name, and no nation would accept such slander. We, Muslims, would be equally indignant if the Prophet Moses, Jesus, or any other Prophet of God was slandered.
This does not mean that we approve of or agree to the idea of executing Salman Rushdy or even trying him in court, for the simple reason that he does not live in a Muslim country.
4. The press and media of the western world have

confused and are still confusing the issue by not differentiating between the freedom and expression of thought and the freedom to slander, abuse, and insult when it is essential to differentiate between them. The fact that Salman Rushdy chose to slander and abuse the sacred beliefs and the Islamic holy values is proof that he has run out of inspiration, and it is a well known fact that when a writer lacks inspiration, he chooses a delicate issue that is related to sacred beliefs and values which attracts many readers in order to regain his previous fame.
It would have been wiser for the Muslims to have ignored Salman Rushdy's slander, for he is not the first person to attack the sacred values and beliefs of Islam, nor will he be the last. None of Salman Rushdy's works or any other person's works will have any effect on the Faith of Islam, which has endured for over fourteen centuries and still endures the hostile and unjust attacks on it.

(3) Is the Islamic code of punishment brutal?
1- Islam is not a religion that advocates brutality. On the contrary it calls for mercy, clemency, and toleration. Nevertheless, it insists on establishing law and order in the community so as to safeguard the freedom and the rights of its members, and to protect their lives, beliefs. wealth, possessions, and families. When Islam imposes a certain punishment for a

specific sin, it takes into consideration two factors:
(a) Man is not infallible, but is constantly exposed to temptation. Thus the door of repentance is always open to those who regret having committed sins and repent and desire to atone.
(b) Every member of the community is entitled to live a life of safety and to feel that he, his family, and his property are not exposed to any kind of danger. Thus the depraved or corrupted behaviour of criminals should be dealt with accordingly, so that the peace-loving members of the community would not live in a state of fear and apprehension.
2- Although Islam has made laws to punish crimes, it requires decisive proof of the guilt of the accused person before passing a sentence on him and does not enforce the punishment if there is any doubt concerning his guilt. Also if any guilty person repents sincerely of his sin, the sentence can be suspended if the judge is convinced of the sincerity of the accused. The Prophet said: "Try to prevent forcing the penalty on Muslims whenever it is possible to do so, and should there be the slightest doubt as to the guilt of the accused person, set him free. It is far better that a judge errs in remitting the penalty than erring in enforcing it."
Such an authentic Saying from the Traditions of the Prophet is the essence of mercy and tolerance.
3- The penalty for adultery in Islam depends on a

certain condition that makes it almost impossible to enforce. The condition is that the act of adultery must be witnessed by four people who must swear that they saw the act committed. Accordingly, the two incidents in the history of Islam when this penalty was enforced were the result of the confession of the guilty parties and not of the evidence of witnesses. The Prophet did his best to try and persuade the guilty persons to change their statements in which they confessed their guilt but they confirmed them and the Prophet was accordingly compelled to order enforcing the penalty, in spite of his profound grief. In view of the condition stipulated and the extreme difficulty of fulfilling it, such a punishment never occurred again in the history of Islam.

4-Islam does not cut off the hand of a starving person who steals to feed himself or to feed his starving children. Islam punishes the thief who steals the money or possessions of hard-working people who earn their living honestly. Such a thief spreads evil in the community and deserves no sympathy or mercy from anybody for he himself had no mercy or sympathy for the people whom he robbed. In fact the victim might have been in dire need of the money stolen from him, and every community is entitled to have laws that are enforced to ensure its safety and stability.

When this penalty was imposed in Islamic communities, the crime of theft occurred so infrequently that merchants left their goods unguarded and people did not lock the doors of their houses. On the other hand, theft is widespread and rampant in communities where lenient measures are taken against it, with the result that theft has become a serious problem in many communities.[1]

5-The reasons for imposing the penalty for theft is to ensure social justice and to abolish poverty, which would prevent people from resorting to theft. It is significant to note that the second Rightly-Guided Caliph. 'Omar Ibn Al-Khattab, suspended the penalty incurred by theft in the year that famine struck the Islamic states.

During the first years of' 'Omar Ibn AI-Khattab's reign, the penalty for theft was justly enforced with the result that the crime of theft and highway robbery were so rare that the people who traveled from Makkah to Syria were perfectly safe and feared no one but God Almighty, and the possibility that their sheep might be attacked by wolves. This state of stability existed because every thief knew what his punishment would be and thought thousand times before committing the crime of theft or any other crime, with the result that the punishment theft was

[1] Al-Ghazali, Muhammad, One Hundred Questions about Islam. Vol. 2, p. 41.

very rarely enforced.
Which then is preferable, a law-abiding community that lives in peace without fear even if a few criminals are punished, or a community that lives in fear while its prisons are crowded with criminals? With whom should we sympathize? The criminal or the members of community?

(4) Why are Muslims disunited despite Islam's call for unity?

1- There is no denying that Muslim nations are currently disunited. However, this is a stage in the history of Muslim nations, and this stage, which all nations have experienced in the course of their history, is not permanent by any means. The nations of Europe have been able to overcome the factors that led to the contention and disunity of Europe, which resulted in two world wars in he twentieth century. The Muslim nations will similarly be able to overcome their problems and differences and create a system of fruitful cooperation for the welfare of all Muslim communities.
Many continuous attempts have been made and are still being made in this respect, although their effectiveness is limited, such as in the Islamic Conference Organization which includes all Muslim states. Nevertheless, it is possible to promote the performance of this and other Islamic organizations

in order to achieve an advanced stage in the cooperation of the various Islamic states.
Islamic principles and teachings concerning unity, cooperation, affinity, and solidarity are the greatest guarantee of the success of all these endeavours in the future.
2- The main sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet, call for unity, cooperation, compassion, and sympathy for others, and warn us against disunity and disputes. This is clearly expressed in the following Qur'anic verses: "And hold fast, all together, by the Rope which God (stretches out for you) and be not divided among yourselves." [3/103]; "And obey God and His Apostle; and fall into no disputes lest you lose heart, and your power depart." [8/46] Islam calls for sympathy for others and alleviating the pain of others and compares a nation to a human body, and the Prophet Muhammad said that if one part of the body suffered any pain or illness, the rest of the body would respond in sympathy by suffering from fever and sleeplessness-
Islam considers all Muslims to be brothers: "The Believers are but a single Brotherhood." [49/10] When the Prophet emigrated from Makkah to Al-Madina, he joined the Emigrants and the inhabitants of Al-Madina, Al-'Ansaar, into one brotherhood and they became sincere, affectionate brothers, who

shared their hopes and their sorrows as they listened together to the verses of the Qur'an. The verses of the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet present us with innumerable examples of their cooperation, affection, and unity.

3- Many external factors, outside the boundaries of the contemporary Muslim nations, have led to dispute and disunity between them. These factors originated during the era when the Muslim nations were dominated by the colonization enforced by the western world. Even after the occupation by these countries came to an end, numerous problems arose such as the problems of the borders between the various states. The policy adopted by the foreign power was based on the principle of "disunite and dominate", and this created ethnic factions among the natives of the colonies. Furthermore, the foreign ruler exploited the country, which led to its poverty and backwardness. the results of which still exist. In fact most of the Islamic nations that were once colonies are still suffering from the aftermath of colonization and foreign rule and the problems that have their roots firmly planted in the earth,

4- Muslims in the countries that had been colonized concentrated upon the problems created by foreign rule and neglected to follow the principles of Islam, which advocate unity and cooperation. Nevertheless, Islam nations still yearn to unite their efforts to

achieve the welfare of all Islamic nations. Any Muslim in any Islamic state feels for and sympathizes with any other Muslim who is exposed to any form of injustice or suffering wherever he may be, for he is part of the large Islamic nation. This will lead to establishing a solid foundation which will encourage attempts to reinstate unity, coordination, and cooperation between the Islamic states. United efforts in the field of culture, economy, politics, security, the exchange of expertise and of all that benefits the Muslim world may help these nations to be more efficient and effective in playing a positive and constructive role in establishing the principles of peace and security all over the world.

(5) Is the Faith of Islam responsible for the backwardness of some Muslim nations?

1- History verifies the fact hat Islam was able to establish a great civilization in a very short period after its advent. This civilization was one of the most lasting civilizations in history. Proof of this can still be witnessed in the various branches of the Islamic heritage, which is manifested in the arts and literature that exist up to this very day. Libraries all over the world exhibit thousands of Islamic manuscripts written in Arabic, which illustrate the extent of the great civilization that was inspired by

the Faith of Islam and which extended from the Easter boundaries of Persia bordering on India in the East to Andalusia, which is known as Spain in the West.

The influence of the grandeur of the Islamic civilization in Spain can still be seen and cannot be denied. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries Europe initiated an organized movement of translating Islamic works in all subjects, and these works which were the outcome of the Islamic civilization, formed the foundation upon which Europe's modern civilization was established.

2- The Qur'an contains many verses which express the greatest respect for knowledge and those who acquire knowledge. The Qur'anic verses urge Muslims to look at the Universe and meditate upon creation and how the earth was prepared for habitation. The very first five verses inspired to the Prophet emphasized the importance of knowledge, reading, and meditation. This matter was understood by the Muslims to be of the greatest significance and they accordingly followed the Divine Command.

3- The backwardness of some Muslims today cannot be blamed on Islam, since Islam is against all forms of backwardness. When Muslims fail to understand the true spirit and teachings of Islam they will be unable to keep pace with the progress of the world that increases daily. The reason for this situation was

explained by the famous Algerian intellectual, the late Malik Ibn Nabi, who said that the backwardness that Muslims suffer today is not in any way caused by Islam but is a penalty deservedly inflicted by Islam upon Muslims for forsaking its teachings, and not for adhering to it, as is believed by many people who are ignorant of the truth of the matter. Thus there is absolutely no connection between Islam and the backwardness of some Muslims.

4- Islam keeps pace with every aspect of the development of civilization and will continue to do so for the benefit of mankind. When Muslims search for the real cause of their backwardness, they will realize that in no way Islam is to blame. There are many other factors which date back to the aftermath of colonization, which hindered the development and progress of the Islamic World. This factor, in addition to the internal problems of these lands, led the Muslims to neglect and forget the constructive elements that are essential for development and progress as advocated by Islam.

5- Under no circumstances should Islam be held responsible for the backward state of some Muslim countries in the world of today. This can be considered a stage in the history of these nations which will not continue forever. Likewise, Islam cannot be accused of being responsible for the backwardness of Latin America.

Academic objectivity in judging Islam's attitude towards civilization should be based on a fair and unbiased study of the principles of Islam and not on rumours, false allegations, and preconceived opinions that have no bearing whatsoever on the truth of the matter.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Questions about Certain Rulings of Islam

(1) Does fasting hinder production?

1- Fasting was not introduced by Islam, and the Qur'an states that the religious ruling of fasting was observed by the nations that preceded Islam. "O you who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you." [2/183]

Other religions still follow this religious observance until today, but there is a difference between fasting in Islam and fasting in other religions since fasting in Islam is prescribed during a certain month in the lunar year, namely the month of Ramadan. Fasting begins at dawn and ends at sunset, and between dawn and sunset one must refrain from eating, drinking, and desires of the body. This means that the Muslim works during the hours that he is fasting and that is why some people imagine that fasting restricts the Muslim's ability to perform his work well.

2- Fasting is not to be blamed on this account, for fasting has the undeniable effect of charging people with spiritual energy, thus enabling them to work more energetically than when they are not fasting. The Battle of Badr was fought and won by the Muslims while they were fasting in the month of Ramadan. Egyptian troops fought while they were

fasting in the 6th of October 1973 war and were victorious; This is proof that fasting does not restrict one's activity or ability to perform one's duty. On the contrary it increases it with a charge of spiritual energy.

3- The lack of activity and decrease in productivity in some Muslim countries during the month of fasting is not due to fasting but to other factors. People are in the habit of staying up all night and they are naturally exhausted on the following day and are unable to make the effort needed to work and they put the blame on fasting. Had fasting been the cause, they would have felt exhausted at the end of the day and not at the beginning of the day.

4- It has been proved that fasting has many medical, spiritual, social, and educational benefits. It is considered an annual opportunity for one to contemplate one's actions and conduct, to meditate one's previous behaviour, and to judge oneself objectively in order to avoid the recurrence of any errors one might have made and also to do one's best to rid one's community of any social problems that might exist.

(2) Is it true that alms giving grants wealthy people an advantage over poor people in winning the Grace of God?

1- Alms in Islam are considered the first organized

system of taxation in the history of the economy of the world. Prior to Islam, heads of states imposed taxes as they willed, according to the wealth they needed for their own personal requirements. The burden of taxes was laid chiefly on the poor whereas the rich were often exempted.

With the advent of Islam and its legislation of alms, Islam organized the collection of alms and specified the amount to be paid. Furthermore, Islam imposed alms only on wealthy people and people of medium means and exempted poor people.[1] Alms giving is not only a system of finance but is also a religious duty like praying, fasting, and making the pilgrimage to Makkah and is therefore obligatory for all those who qualify to pay it, who do so, not through any fear of the governing regime but out of their desire to obey the laws of Islam and to seek the Grace of God.

2- During the lifetime of the Prophet, poor people felt that they were at a disadvantage for not being able to donate alms as did the rich. They believed that by giving alms, rich people gained the Grace of God for performing this religious duty while they were unable to do so through no fault of theirs, as they were not to be blamed for their poverty.

They expressed their fears to the Prophet who advised them to glorify, praise, and declare the

[1] Qutb, Muhammad, False Allegations Ascribed to Islam, Wahba Bookshop, 1960. P. 91.

greatness of God thirty-three times after each prayer, assuring them that this would elevate them to the same status of rich people who gave alms.[1]

3- The criterion recognized by the Qur'an by which people are judged is that of piety and righteousness as is stated in the following Qur'anic verse: 'Verily the most honoured of you in the Sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you." [49/13] By righteousness is meant any good deed that a person performs whether it be in the cause of God by obeying His Commands or for the welfare of mankind in this world or by repelling evil.

Thus to come within God's Grace does not only depend upon giving alms and upon other religious observances but also depends upon one's attitude, disposition, conduct, and what one utters. Islam attaches the greatest importance and value to one's intention, as stated by the Prophet:

"Deeds are valued according to one's intentions". Consequently, a poor man who sincerely wishes that he were able to give alms shall be rewarded by God for his sincere intention, whereas rich people who give alms ostentatiously to attain a high status among the people who witness their display of charity will not attain the divine reward.

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[1] Fath Al-Bar; Commentary on the Authentic Al-Bukhari. Vol.2 Verified by Abdel Baqi, M. Fou'ad. Salafia Publishing House, p. 325.

(3) Why did Islam prohibit eating the flesh of pigs?

1- Islam was not the first religion to prohibit the eating of the flesh of pigs. The Jewish religion prohibited it at an earlier date. In Europe and America Jews do not eat the flesh of pigs, except in very rare cases, and nobody criticizes them. On the contrary, they respect their adherence to their faith. On most flights in the U.S.A Jews demand Jewish or Kosher food and they are served without any remarks of criticism, because the Western World respects the religious observances of the Jewish faith. With the advent of Christ, he declared that he had not come to change the religious laws of the Jews, so it is only logical to assume that the flesh of pigs was also prohibited in Christianity.[1]

2- Islam also prohibited eating the flesh of pigs and this prohibition is in keeping with the same prohibition of previous Divine faiths. The Qur'an refers to this prohibition in four Qur'anic verses, namely: 2/173, 5/9,6/145 and 16/115.

In addition to this religious prohibition, there are many other reasons which corroborate this prohibition. Muslim scientists have proved that eating the flesh of pig is extremely harmful, especially in hot climates. The Qur'anic verses which

[1] Qardawi, Yusuf, The Permitted and the Prohibited, Qatar, 1978, p.42.

prohibit eating the flesh of pigs add to it the prohibition of eating carrion and blood, and the danger of eating carrion and blood is an undeniable fact as a result of the micro-organisms and toxins they contain.

Although recent scientific methods have succeeded in treating the flesh of pigs in such a way as to render it free of micro-organisms, no one can predict what the future holds. Scientists took centuries to discover one disease, and God Almighty, who created man, knows what is good for him and what harms him, the following Qur'anic verse emphasizes this fact: "But over all endued with knowledge is One, The All- Knowing." [12/76]

3- Islam takes into consideration the necessities which may arise under certain circumstances and it permits what had been prohibited such as eating the flesh of pigs. This is declared in the following Qur'anic verse: "But if one is forced by necessity without wi1ful disobedience, nor transgressing due limits, then he is guiltless. For God is oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." [2/173]

(4)Why does Islam prohibit men from wearing gold ornaments and silk clothes?

1- This prohibition is based upon n number of the Sayings of the Prophet and has been approved by the majority of Muslim scholars. Their opinion is that

strength and resolution are essential qualities in a man and Islam advocates that a man should not be surrounded by any signs of weakness, or for that matter signs of luxury since luxury usually goes hand in hand with social injustice. A man should be resolute, determined, and courageous in everyday life and when he participates in battles to defend his faith and homeland. Wearing gold ornaments an clothes made of silk arc indications of luxury which is not approved of by Islam. Moreover, Islam does not forbid women to wear gold ornaments, any form of jewelry, or silk material, since women's love of gold, jewelry and adornment is an inherent trait in their nature.

2- In spite of this prohibition should the necessity arise for a man to wear clothes made of silk material, Islam permits its use. The Prophet Muhammad permitted Abde Rahman Ibn 'Awf and Al-Zubayr lbn Al-'Awwam to wear clothes made of silk when they suffered from a form of allergy of their skin.[1]

3- The Imam Al-Shawkani, who died about 1840, made an intensive study of all the facts and data concerning this matter and he reached the conclusion that the use of gold and silk material are not prohibited but are looked upon with distaste, which signifies that it is a degree less than that of actual

[1] Qardawi, Yusuf, The Permitted and the Prohibited, Qatar, 1978, p.80-82.

prohibition. He established his opinion on the fact that no less than twenty of the Companions of the Prophet, among whom were Anas and Al-Baraa' lbn 'Azib, wore clothes made of silk material. Had such a matter been prohibited they would have never worn these clothes and the rest of their Companions would have never allowed the matter to pass undisputed.

As regards the wearing of gold rings most Muslim scholars declared its prohibition and they based their opinion on several sayings of the Prophet. Another group of Muslim scholars maintained that it was not prohibited but was looked upon with distaste, They came to this conclusion when they learnt that a number of the Prophet's Companions, among whom were Sa'd Ibn Abi Waqqas, Talha lbn 'Obayd Allah, Sohayb, Hudhayfa, Jabir Ibn Samra, and Al-Baraa' Ibn 'Azib wore gold rings. Therefore, wearing a gold rings is looked upon with distaste but is not prohibited.[1]

[1] Sabeq. Sayed. Jurisprudence of the Sunna. Vol. 3, Beirut. Pp. 482 ff. And 488 ff.